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NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historical Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name LaCrosse Commercial Historic District
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Various - See Section 7 not for publication N/A
city or town LaCrosse vicinity N/A
state Wisconsin code WI county LaCrosse code 063 zip code 54601

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official _____ Date 7/27/94
State Historic Preservation Officer-WI

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State Historic Preservation Officer - Wisconsin
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

	Signature of the Keeper	Entered in the National Register	Date of Action
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register <u>See continuation sheet.</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>9/2/94</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <u>See continuation sheet.</u>			
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register			
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register			
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain): _____			

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

Noncontributing

☒ private☐ public-local☐ public-State☐ public-Federal☐ building(s)☒ district☐ site☐ structure☐ object

94

17

94

17

buildings
sites
structures
objects
Total**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the**National Register** 4**6. Function or Use****Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/business

COMMERCE/TRADE/professional

COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

COMMERCE/TRADE/department store

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/business

COMMERCE/TRADE/professional

COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Romanesque

Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

roof asphalt

walls brick

concrete

other wood

stone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

LaCrosse Commercial Historic District
Name of Property

LaCrosse County, Wisconsin
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

1866 - 1940

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Schick, Hugo and Stoltze, Gustav

Schick, Hugo and Roth, Andrew

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☒ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository: Area Research Center, UW-LaCrosse, LaCrosse, WI

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 15 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 15 640480 4852140

Zone Easting Northing

2 15 640380 4852300

3 15 640450 4852420

Zone Easting Northing

4 15 640600 4852460

X See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Barbara Kooiman, Architectural Historian

organization U.S. West Research, Inc. date August 22, 1993

street & number 421 Main St., Suite 306 telephone (608) 782-3338

city or town La Crosse state WI zip code 54601

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name See attached

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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LaCrosse Commercial Historic District,

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INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION NATIONAL PARK SERVICE LaCrosse County, Wisconsin

Section 7. Description

The La Crosse Commercial Historic District comprises the central business district of LaCrosse, Wisconsin, which spans from the mid-1860's through the 1960's in construction dates. It is located within the traditional commercial area of La Crosse that extends east, uphill from the Mississippi River to 7th Street, bounded by State Street on the north and King Street to the south (See District map). The buildings within the district are densely packed, narrow, mostly two-story brick commercial buildings interspersed with several three, four, and up to eight-storied examples. There are 115 commercial buildings in the district, including twenty-one architecturally and historically significant representatives of La Crosse's history and architecture.

The boundaries of the LaCrosse Commercial Historic District enclose the core of the commercial district, while maintaining the visual sense of compact urban landscape. This landscape, like most commercial districts built during this era, reflect the pre-automobile requirements of urban planning, with dense building proximity, geared toward the needs of the pedestrian. The west end of the district (the west side of Second Street, between Main and Pearl Streets), was, in the two decades following the Civil War, the main thoroughfare of the commercial district, because its proximity to the river gave it access to the river boat docks. The commercial buildings which once stood between Second Street and the Mississippi River were removed for urban renewal projects in the 1970s and 80s. The east end of the district, furthest from the Mississippi River, features the most recently built buildings within the district. Many of these buildings were built in the early decades of the twentieth century, and their materials and styles reflect the evolution of the commercial district as it shifted further from the river through the decades. Virtually all of the buildings within the district were, and are, commercial in function.

LaCrosse's first commercial buildings, in the 1840s and 50s, tended to be constructed of wood. However, after many serious fires in the commercial district, the city government began enacting fire laws in 1857, and construction of more fire-resistant buildings, built with brick and stone, commenced in the downtown area. Indeed, most of the buildings in the historic district are built of

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brick, with few exceptions. Only the Batavian Bank, built in 1887, at 319 Main Street, and the 1885 McMillan Building at 401 Main Street are representatives of stone construction in the district. The early twentieth century alternative to wood and brick construction, concrete, was used in the Hoeschler Building at 115 South 5th Avenue in 1930, and the Exchange Building at 201-205 South 5th Avenue in 1940.

The buildings in the commercial historic district have retained much of their original architectural character, such as cornices and window ornament on the upper stories. Although most storefronts and interior spaces have been modified at various times over the years, most buildings in the district maintain a high degree of integrity on their upper stories. Historic cast-iron storefront posts and lintels have remained on several buildings. The intersection of Pearl Street and South 4th Street has retained the strongest 19th century architectural character of the entire LaCrosse Commercial Historic District. Of the 115 buildings within the commercial historic district, only seventeen (17) are considered as non-contributing to the historic character of the district. Of those seventeen, only four are less than fifty years old. The other non-contributing buildings are at least fifty years old, but, they have lost their architectural integrity through the incompatible application of modern facade materials such as stucco, metal and tile.

LaCrosse's Commercial Historic District is comprised of a diversity of architectural styles and forms. Early brick commercial vernacular forms are found on the 200 block of Pearl Street, which is complemented by nearby Commercial Italianate style buildings on the 300 block of Pearl Street, as well as South Third Street, the 200 block of Main Street and the 100 block of South Second Street. Romanesque styles are found in a variety of locations within the historic district, including two Richardsonian Romanesque styles constructed of stone on Main Street. Eclectic Victorian styles are found on the 400 block of Main Street, as well as the 100 block of South Fourth Street. Two fine Neo-classical style commercial buildings are found on the 100 block of North Fourth Street.

Twentieth century historic architectural styles are also represented in LaCrosse. There is an excellent example of the Chicago Commercial style on South Fourth Street and Main Street (the Doerflinger Building), and interesting concrete Art Moderne and Art Deco style commercial

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structures located on the 100 and 200 blocks of South Fifth Avenue.

Architectural Development

The LaCrosse Commercial Historic District represents the commercial architectural development of the city from its earliest extant brick vernacular 19th-century commercial building, the John Vogel Building on Pearl Street (1866), through the early modern period when the last historic structure, the Exchange Building on 5th Avenue was built, in 1940. Based on the evidence presented by the extant buildings, the Italianate style was the most prevalent influence in La Crosse in the 1870s. One of the three most architecturally significant examples of the commercial Italianate style is the Solberg Building constructed in 1870 at 127-129 S. Third Street. Two other examples, Powell Place at 200-212 Main Street and the Pamperin Cigar Company Building at 113 S. Second Street, were built in the late 1870s.

The architectural character of the commercial district began to change during the boom years 1880-1905. Although the commercial architecture continued the earlier Italianate fashion, the extant commercial buildings reflect a definite taste for the Romanesque Revival styles and for late 19th century eclecticism. During 1885-1886, the McMillan building was constructed as an office building for Alexander McMillan. The massive stone Romanesque design was constructed at Fourth and Main streets. The year after the McMillan Building was completed, the Batavian Bank at 319 Main Street was constructed in a Richardsonian Romanesque style.

Romanesque influence continued in other LaCrosse commercial buildings after the construction of the McMillan Building and the Batavian Bank. Substituting red brick for stone resulted in a less massive design for the Tillman Brothers Furniture Block at 118 S. Fourth Street constructed in 1889, utilized red brick in the construction, making the building a less massive example of Romanesque style. Dominated by colossal round arches that are echoed in the smaller arcade across the upper story, the second story of the former furniture company building has retained its bay window, but the original has been altered.

Stoltze and Schick, a LaCrosse architectural firm which practiced from 1888 to 1899, designed

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many of LaCrosse's commercial structures in the late 1880s and 1890s (LaCrosse Chronicle, 19 Feb. 1888). Best described as architects of eclectic styles, Stoltze and Schick designed the John Rehfuß Building in 1894 at 412 Main Street, using stylistic devices similar to those used in their C. & J. Michel Building at 113 - 115 South 3rd in 1892. The red sandstone-trimmed red brick Rehfuß Building exhibits a projecting cornice influenced by the late Italianate style, two-story oriels associated with the Queen Anne style, a row of small round-arched windows associated with the Romanesque Revival style, and brick pilasters of a Classical Revival design.

Buildings incorporating Neo-Classical Revival designs became popular in the country in the 1890s and early 20th century. The Wisconsin Telephone Company Building, initially designed by H.J. Esser of Milwaukee in 1900 and revised by Hugo Schick of LaCrosse, was constructed on the corner of Fourth and State Streets in 1901. Exhibiting terra-cotta ornament moulded in classical designs, a projecting cornice and rusticated base, the Telephone Company Building is one of two buildings of the Neo-Classical Revival style in the LaCrosse Commercial Historic District. The Rivoli Building at 115 - 123 N. Fourth Street, adjacent to the Wisconsin Telephone Building, was designed by the LaCrosse architectural firm Parkinson and Dockendorff in 1920. The five-story brick commercial building features the orderly symmetry of the Neo-Classical Revival style, accented with classical ornamentation and cornice.

Between 1890 and 1915, the development of modern building technology contrasted with the historic Revival styles. Dependent on historic styles for ornament, the brick Doerflinger Building at 400 Main Street was designed in the Chicago Commercial style by local architects, Schick and Roth, in 1904. After the city recovered from the economic depression caused by the collapse of the lumber industry between 1905 and 1910, the trend towards "modern" construction established by the erection of the Doerflinger Building continued. Concrete and colored ceramic tile created an Art Deco style in the 1930 Hoeschler Building at 115 South Fifth Avenue. Smooth concrete facing, a curved corner, and bands of plain windows are used to give a streamlined quality to the Art Moderne 1940 Exchange Building at 201-205 S. Fifth Street.

Of the 115 properties located in the LaCrosse Commercial Historic District, twenty-one are especially architecturally and/or historically significant buildings. These significant buildings are

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arranged by architectural styles below.

Commercial Vernacular Buildings

1. & 2. John Vogel Buildings, 211 - 215 Pearl St., 1866 - 1868

These two, small, identical two-story brick commercial buildings are adjacent to each other. 213 - 215 Pearl Street was constructed in 1866, the same year that John Vogel purchased the lot, while 211 Pearl Street was constructed in 1868, also by Vogel. These vernacular form buildings feature flat roofs and three-bay brick facades, which are ornamented by a moulded brick cornice and by metal window heads resting on corbels projecting above the three rectangular windows on the upper story. A moulded brick stringcourse is also featured over the storefront. The second story windows, which were originally one-over-one sash, are now enclosed with plywood inserts. The storefronts are cast iron. The interior spaces have been recently remodeled for current commercial use. The 1866 structure at 213 - 215 Pearl Street is the oldest remaining commercial building in the LaCrosse Commercial Historic District.

3. George Zeisler Building, 201 Pearl Street, 1886 (NRHP 2/25/1993)

This small, Italianate-influenced, commercial vernacular form building is a two-story, four-bay red brick structure with a stone foundation and flat roof. The building sits on the northeast corner of Pearl and S. Second Street. The primary facade of this building faces Pearl Street, and the storefront features an inset centered doorway. The transoms have been infilled. A molded metal cornice wraps around both street-facing facades, dividing the first and second floors. The second floor features simple windows, with stone lintels, and additional stone beltcourses both above and below the windows. The frieze and cornice are the most ornamental features of this building, with a metal entablature at the frieze accented by metal rosette medallions. The corbelled cornice is further decorated with triangular pediments on both facades, inlaid with "starburst" designs. The interior, though altered somewhat throughout the years, still features an open floor plan indicative of commercial buildings, with the original inlaid colored tile flooring.

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Italianate Style

4. Solberg Building, 127-129 S. Third St., 1870

The Solberg Building is an excellent example of Commercial Italianate architecture. It is a three story painted brick building, with two bays on the main facade. Standing on the northeast corner of S. Third Street and Pearl Street, the storefront faces both streets, while the recessed entrance faces the primary street, S. Third. An elaborate corbelled beltcourse divides the first floor from the upper two floors. Brick pilasters extend from the ground to the frieze on both street-facing facades. The second story features two-over-two sash windows with elaborate metal window hoods. A second brick beltcourse divides the second from the third stories. Simple stone sills lie just above the course, and the two-over-two sash windows on the third story have rounded heads. Metal window hoods of a slightly simpler design cap these windows. All window hoods are typical of those found on Italianate style buildings. The frieze is a series of panels with round medallions in the center of each, divided by paired brackets which are supporting an overhanging cornice. The interior first floor has remained remarkably intact, with original hardwood floors and woodwork.

5. Healy Block, 200 - 212 Main St., 1872 - 1878 (NRHP 12/22/1983)

This large red brick-clad commercial block occupies the southeast corner of the Main Street - Second Street intersection. It consists of a two-story wing that fronts on Main Street and a three-story wing that fronts on both Main Street and Front Street. Decorative features include a projecting bracketed and dentil trimmed cornice of metal, elaborate Italianate style arched window hoods, cast iron pilasters and fluted Corinthian columns on the store fronts. The window hoods on the second floor have a basket handle-arched shape, while the third story window hoods are completely rounded, with round top windows set in the window frame. The three-story section has brick exterior walls articulated by corbeled brick work, brick piers, and belt courses. The cornice has decorative brackets with an overhanging eave. The interior has been completely remodelled for the current commercial use, utilizing a "mall" plan, with interior halls directing the pedestrian to different commercial establishments. This building was rehabilitated after it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983, and is now functioning as a shopping arcade with specialty shops and restaurants.

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6. Pamperin Cigar Building, 113 S. Second St., 1879

This two-story brick commercial building features an elaborate sheet metal cornice with large and small brackets, dentil trim, and a triangular-shaped pediment rising above the cornice. Ornamental arched metal window hoods accent tall, narrow, round-topped windows. The recessed facade is accented by corbelling along the top and bordered by staged, capped, brick piers on the sides. The metal store front has remained intact with iron columns and copper apron. Much of the interior has also remained intact, exhibiting much of the original cigar making machinery, tools and furniture.

Neo-Classical Style

7. Wisconsin Telephone Building, 125 N. Fourth St., 1901 (NRHP 3/7/1985)

The Wisconsin Telephone Building was designed by Milwaukee architect Herman J. Esser in 1900, though revised by local architect Hugo Schick in 1901, when he was supervising its construction. The building was further altered in 1920, when it was reused as the Security Savings Bank, remodeled by local architect Otto Merman. Thus, the present two-story, light brown brick building exhibits Merman's Neo-Classical influences, such as a projecting portico on the main entrance on N. Fourth Street. The entrance features fluted Doric columns flanking the copper doors. One-over-one sash windows are surrounded by simple brick frames. The secondary entrance on State Street features cut stone moldings around the door, capped by a classical-inspired cornice and stone lion statue. Cast iron fencing decorates the main facades of the building, and a cast iron railing graces a small second story balcony over the N. Fourth Street entrance. A simple dentiled course accents the top of the facades, near the simple cornice. The interior has been extensively remodelled for current office usage. (Rausch: NRHP "Wisconsin Telephone Building.")

8. Rivoli Building, 115 - 123 N. Fourth St., 1920

This massive, three-story, light brown brick building was designed by local architects Parkinson and Dockendorff. It features the typical symmetry of the Neo-Classical style. The building is eleven-bays-wide, with alternate single and double brick pilasters capped by ornamental terra cotta panels at the top. The first floor storefronts have been altered through the years, with four

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storefronts and a central entrance to the movie theatre. The windows are vertical four-over-one sash. The frieze is separated from the main elevation by a prominent brick beltcourse, and is ornamented with oval-shaped terra cotta medallions. The cornice is capped with a parapet and a rounded and stepped pediment. Though many of the offices and storefronts have been altered throughout the years, the movie theatre interior remains much the way it did after a remodelling in 1931. The interior features a Spanish courtyard motif, with an open sky appearance painted onto the ceiling. The seats were replaced in a 1962 remodelling.

Eclectic Buildings

9. John Reh fuss Building, 414-418 Main St., 1894

This three-story brick commercial building exhibits features from Romanesque styles and Queen Anne styles, as well as Neo-Classical influences. This red brick building has an architecturally significant storefront which is not original to the building, with two inset doorways, and three display windows. The transom extending across the facade on the first floor has been covered by signage. A simple molded beltcourse separates distinguishes the first floor from the floors above. The second and third stories are accented with paired one-over-one-light windows in the center, and larger one-over-one-light sash windows on either side. Flanking this series of windows are large, fixed pane windows which are encased in elaborate molded metal surrounds. These surrounds feature pilasters on each side of the windows, with molded spandrels under the sills, and molded cornices dividing the second and third-story windows. The third story windows are capped with a hipped cap. Above the third-story windows is an arcade of small, arched windows. The entire roofline is ornamented with an elaborate metal cornice, which exhibits brackets and overhanging entablature. The cornice is capped with a stepped parapet, which has a name plate in the center with the name "John Reh fuss" imprinted in the molded metal, with classical sash garlands on each side. The interior showroom floor features an open plan, with supporting columns and the original pressed tin ceiling.

10. E. R. Barron Block, 426 Main St., 1891 (NRHP 6/19/1985)

This three-story brick commercial building was designed in an Eclectic combination of Romanesque, Queen Anne, and Neo-Classical influences. The north facade, facing Main Street, is characterized by an asymmetrical facade design. The storefront, which has been minimally

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altered, features a centered, inset doorway, with horizontal panels in place of transoms, decorated by dentils just under the second story beltcourse.

The right-hand bay of the north facade features an elaborate, classically-detailed side entrance. Tripartite pilasters flank the doorway, capped by a square window with multi-lights surrounding a circular center pane. The window is capped by a Greek Revival style dentiled pediment. A pair of sash windows is set under a Romanesque arch above the pediment, with a secondary pediment capping the arch.

The second story of the north facade features a row of two-over-two flat-arched sash windows with brick lintels. The west end of the second and third story is accented by a two story oriel bay window, which is a newer replacement of the bay that was part of the original design. A molded and dentiled stringcourse divides the second and third story. The third-story windows are also two-over-two sash, capped by semi-circular panes, which are surrounded by Romanesque style arches. A molded metal panel above the third story windows proclaims the name "E.R. Barron" flanked by Classical style garlands. The elaborately dentiled cornice is further accented by a pedimented parapet, which has a molded metal panel with the date "1891" and the Eastern Star of the Masons, which provides evidence of the Masons' use of this building as a meeting hall. The interior has been extensively remodelled in a 1980s rehabilitation, with the addition of a second floor mezzanine to accommodate second story offices and businesses.

11. Gund Building, 327 Pearl Street, 1885

This three story painted brick building features elements of the Queen Anne style. The storefront exhibits a glass door with aluminum trim on the westerly edge of the building which leads to the stairwell giving access to the second and third floor apartments. This door is set at the same sidewalk setback as all other storefronts on the street. The large plate-glass display window, is set at an angle from the street which angles in toward the building, allowing the door into the storefront to be inset from the street. The storefront door is also trimmed in aluminum with large windows. Along the bottom and edges of the door and storefront window are metal trim panels in two shades of pale green. The color on these panels appears to be a baked painted finish. A dark green and white painted sign advertising Arenz Shoe Store spans across the Gund Building, as

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well as the adjacent Burgermeister Building the length of the two buildings above the storefront windows, at the base of the second story.

The upper two stories of this building are visually dominated by a centered, two story tall oriel bay window. The oriel is three sided, with large fixed pane windows divided by a horizontal muntin approximately two-thirds of the way up the window. Narrow, one-over-one sash windows are set on each side of the oriel. The oriel itself is highly decorative, with a rounded bottom and top. Small engaged columns run vertically along the edges of the oriel, as well as between the windows extending along the two stories of the oriel. The engaged columns terminate in Corinthian capitals. In the panels between the stories in the oriel are Classical style swags, and rectangular sections which feature vertical brickwork. Immediately above the third story windows in the oriel are floral-shaped patera, which are round low-relief sculptural ornaments. The oriel is capped with a curved tent roof, constructed of metal.

Two story brick pilasters flank either side of the oriel, and come together above the oriel near the cornice. Directly above the oriel is an entablature, capped by a Classical style pediment, which is surrounded by dentils and molded trim. In the pediment is the name "Gund," in relief letters, apparently attached to the brick.

One-over-one sash windows, constructed of wood trim, are located on either side of the oriel. Outside each of these windows is another pair of two story pilasters. The cornice is finished with brick corbelling and a simple band which caps the entire cornice.

Romanesque Revival Style

12. Batavian Building. 319 Main St., 1887 - 1888

The main facade of this four-story, stone, Romanesque Revival building is organized into bays whose semi-circular arched heads are linteled, forming arcades. Both the first-story and its mezzanine and the second and third-stories are composed of two-story tall bays. An arcade of smaller windows spans the fourth story. The flat roof once had a low hipped roof in its place, and the overhanging cornice is supported by extended shaped beam ends. Massive arches on the first

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floor facade were removed when the entrance was remodeled in 1927 by A. Moorman & Co. of St. Paul, Minnesota (LaCrosse Tribune-Leader Press, 15 May 1927). The interior has been extensively remodelled through the years for the building's current use as offices. The building was designed by the nationally known Chicago architect, Solomon S. Beman.

13. McMillan Building, 401 Main St., 1885 - 1886

The main facade of this five-story, Richardsonian Romanesque building, designed by architects Frank Long and Frederick Kees of Minneapolis, features triple window groups which are arranged vertically into three-story bays that have large Romanesque arches at the third-story level (Northwestern Architect Supplement, Dec. 1886). The primary facade, on Main Street, features four such arches. The fifth story features a band of simple windows, and a corbelled stone parapet. The facade of this building at the storefront level was altered in 1957, with the removal of arched doorways. These were replaced with polished brown stone, which at the main entrance extends into the second story. The alley side and rear of the building is faced in brick rather than the rusticated stone that faces the main facades. The interior has been extensively remodelled in recent years to support its current use as State Bank of LaCrosse and upper floor offices. This building is distinctive as one of two remaining stone commercial buildings in the district.

14. Tillman Brothers Furniture Block, 118 S. Fourth St., 1889

This tall, narrow, brick building is visually dominated by three semi-circular arched bays that span the facade. The arches are repeated in a smaller arcade just below the cornice. A small projecting cornice with parapet above and corbelled brick below ornaments the top of the facade. A second story oriel bay window, which is now filled in, is ornamented by iron pilasters. The building was designed by LaCrosse architects Schick and Stoltze. The original open floor retail room has remained relatively intact.

Chicago Style

15. Doerflinger Building, 400 Main St., 1903

The Doerflinger Building is a significant contribution to the LaCrosse Commercial Historic District due to the fact that it was the first Chicago style building to be constructed in the district. Designed

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by local architects Schick and Roth, the four-story steel frame building has brick exterior walls, with little ornamentation. The most significant feature of the building is its fenestration. The second and third stories of the building are banded with so-called "Chicago windows," which are large, fixed pane windows in the center, and narrower, one-over-one sash windows flanking each side of the fixed pane window. The first floor exhibits its original storefronts, which extend the length of the building both facing Main Street and South Fourth Street. Each of these facades has a centered recessed entrance with double doors. Above the display windows is a band of frosted glass transoms. Horizontal metal canopies shelter the main entrances and they are accented by semi-circular panels, with the name "Doerflinger's" painted on. The fourth story is demarcated by a molded beltcourse both above and below a band of two-part windows. An overhanging cornice has scrolled brackets underneath. Though there has been some remodelling for current retail use, the original first floor retail showroom and mezzanine has remained basically intact. The upper floors still maintain their open space.

Commercial Style16. Newburg Building. 413-421 Main St., 1917

This five-story brick building has a four-bay facade, accentuated by the full height compound brick piers with cast concrete caps. The storefront has been altered throughout the years, but, the upper stories have remained intact with the exception of some replacement windows. The original windows have simple surrounds, and are four-over-one sash. The third story windows are further accented with ornamental concrete panels set into the brick spandrels beneath each window. The frieze is decorated with ornamental concrete panels between the piers and in the caps of the brick piers. A simple, fluted cornice caps the building. All of the decorative concrete panels are designed in a Sullivanesque mode, with stylized, organic images. The interior has been considerably altered to maintain its current use as retail and office space.

17. Linker Hotel. 318 Main St., 1915, 1927

The eight-story, brown brick Linker Hotel is visually important as one of the tallest buildings in downtown LaCrosse. This building was originally a three-story commercial structure, erected in 1915 [LaCrosse Leader Press, 11 Sept. 1915]. Then, in 1927 the upper five stories were added to

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the building [LaCrosse Tribune 12 Aug. 1927]. The narrow, main facade of the Linker Hotel is accented by tall brick piers, with contrasting white caps, that divide the upper five stories of the facade. Contrasting white trim and round-arched windows with white keystones characterize the earlier lower stories. The building has a flat roof and simple cornice. The interior has been somewhat remodelled to support its current use as offices.

Prairie School Style

18. O. J. Oyen Building, 507 Main St., 1912

This three-story, one-bay, dark brown brick commercial building is designed in the Prairie School style, with Mediterranean style features incorporated in the overall design. It is significant as the only example in the LaCrosse Commercial Historic District of the work of nationally-known Prairie School architect Percy Bentley. The storefront has been extensively altered. The second-story features an inset four-window group, with simple columns inside the opening creates a distinctive frame. Decorative brick work surrounding the opening. An oval cartouche has been inlaid between the second and third floor. The third floor features a band of five, multi-light leaded casement windows, typical of the Prairie School style. The tall parapet above is further accented by three window panels that are shaded by a pent roof, which is clad in clay barrel tiles. This awning is supported by four large paired brackets. The interior has been extensively altered for its current use as a liquor store.

Art Deco/Moderne Styles

19. Hoeschler Building, 115 Fifth Ave. South, 1930

The Hoeschler Building is a five-story, concrete facade, Art Deco style commercial building. The storefront features a prominent inset doorway, with square metal columns. A transom spans the first floor storefront. Above the first floor, just below the second-story windows, is a row of six wall-sconce iron light fixtures which, though in place, no longer appear to be operational. The five-bay facade is divided, from the second through fifth floors, by rounded pilasters. Paired mosaic tile panels decorate the spandrels between the windows. The interior has been remodelled for the building's current use as an office building.

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20. Exchange Building, 201 - 205 Fifth Ave. South, 1940

The Exchange Building is a six-story, molded concrete, Moderne style commercial building. The building, designed by architect J. Mantor Matson of Racine, Wisconsin, is devoid of all ornamentation other than what has been molded in the concrete on the facade [LaCrosse Tribune, 15 June 1940]. The building's location, on the southeast corner of S. Fifth Avenue and Jay Street, allows the building the opportunity to use the trademark streamlined corner curve of the Moderne style. The first floor features an unaltered storefront, which utilizes a corner entrance. Another entrance, on the S. Fifth Avenue facade, is accentuated by Moderne style molded concrete, which curves into the doorway. It frames the door, which leads to an extremely intact Moderne style lobby and elevator. The windows on the Exchange Building above the first floor are ribbons of glass, which span both street-side facades, while curving around the corner.

21. John Walter Building/Casino Bar, 304 Pearl Street, 1878, ca. 1930

The 1878 John Walter Building is a small Italianate style commercial building, which is representative of its construction date. However, in 1933, the facade and first floor interior were renovated in a Moderne style, with a black Carrara glass facade [LaCrosse Tribune, 19 March 1933]. The window is a horizontal band, with one pane of glass flanked by glass block. The inset door has a port-hole window. The signage is incorporated into the Carrara glass, with the name "Casino" custom printed into the glass panels. Indeed, even the suspended neon sign contributes to this facade, with the name "Casino - Lousy Service" expressed in enamel and neon. The interior carries through with the Moderne style, featuring a curvilinear back-bar which is clad in a wood-grain-finish plastic material. The upholstered, curved booths and tables are tiered to three levels. The stylized lotus blossom lamps complete the Moderne ambiance.

Note on Sources

Dates of construction and historic names of buildings were determined from a number of sources. Initially, the Intensive Inventory Forms from the 1984 LaCrosse Intensive Survey by Joan Rausch and Richard Zeitlin were consulted. In addition, the Rausch and Zeitlin Intensive Survey Report was consulted. Where their research did not reveal exact dates, further research was conducted by

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utilizing city directories and historic newspapers, referred to in the Bibliography of this nomination. The Rausch and Zeitlin Intensive Survey Report was also very useful in forming the discussion on architectural development.

LIST AND CLASSIFICATION OF PROPERTIES IN THE LA CROSSE COMMERCIAL
HISTORIC DISTRICT

Contributing = 98 properties

Non-contributing = 17 properties

Total = 115 properties

#	HISTORIC NAME	STREET ADDRESS	CLASSIFICATION	DATE
<u>Second Street</u>				
1.	Addition to Healy Block	109 South 2nd Street	Non-contributing	ca. 1985
2.	C. & J. Michel Building	111 South 2nd Street	Contributing	1887
3.	Pamperin Cigar Co. Bldg.	113 South 2nd Street	Contributing	1879
4.	M. Hanson Building	125 South 2nd Street	Contributing	1886
5.	Warminger Building	129 South 2nd Street	Contributing	1909
<u>Third Street</u>				
6.	Hammon Bldg.	108 North 3rd Street	Contributing	1884
7.	Pryor Bldg.	110 North 3rd Street	Contributing	ca. 1884
8.	drive through bank	118 North 3rd Street	Non-contributing	ca. 1950
9.	Schierl Bldg.	122 North 3rd Street	Contributing	ca. 1884
10.	Atkinson's Hall	124-126 North 3rd Street	Contributing	ca. 1880's
11.	Meason Building	128 North 3rd Street	Contributing	1882
12.	Rodolf Building	100 South 3rd Street	Non-Contributing	1868-1878
13.	Potter & Morris Bldg.	105 South 3rd Street	Contributing	ca. 1884
14.	W.E.P. Bldg.	107-109 South 3rd Street	Contributing	1870, 1892
15.	S. Gantert Block	110 South 3rd Street	Contributing	1874
16.	Buckle Bldg.	111 South 3rd Street	Contributing	1887
17.	C. & J. Michel Bldg.	113-115 South 3rd Street	Contributing	1892

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18.	commercial building	116 South 3rd St.	Contributing	ca. 1880
19.	P. Wehrers Bldg.	118 South 3rd Street	Contributing	1874
20.	Jehlen Bldg.	119 - 121 South 3rd Street	Contributing	1886
21.	Knuteson Building	120 South 3rd Street	Contributing	ca. 1884
22.	Hals Drug Store	123 South 3rd Street	Contributing	1875
23.	Esperson Block	126-128 South 3rd Street	Contributing	1866-68
24.	Charles Solberg Bldg.	127-129 South 3rd Street	Contributing	1870
25.	Z. & B. Block	213-215 South 3rd Street	Contributing	1894-95
26.	Johnson & Iverson Saloon	217-221 South 3rd Street	Contributing	1910's
27.	Cities Service Filling Station	223 South Third Street	Contributing	1940
<u>Fourth Street</u>				
28.	commercial building	107-9 North 4th Street	Contributing	ca. 1893
29.	commercial building	111 North 4th Street	Non-contributing	ca. 1880's
30.	Rivoli Building	115-23 North 4th Street	Contributing	1920
31.	Wisc. Telephone Co.	125 North 4th Street	Contributing	1901 (NRHP)
32.	Linker Hotel Annex	112 South 4th Street	Contributing	1879, 1922
33.	Dengler Building	114 South 4th Street	Non-Contributing	ca. 1890
34.	Willing Building	117 South 4th Street	Contributing	ca. 1884
35.	Tillman Bros. Bldg.	118 South 4th Street	Contributing	1889
36.	The Bodega	120 South 4th Street	Contributing	1876
37.	Odd Fellow Temple	121 South 4th Street	Contributing	1886
38.	The Bodega	122 South 4th Street	Contributing	ca. 1876
39.	commercial building	123 South 4th Street	Contributing	ca. 1883
40.	commercial building	127 South 4th Street	Contributing	ca. 1883
41.	Dittman & Jorstad Hardware	129 South 4th Street	Contributing	ca. 1884
42.	Kirkeeng Building	133 South 4th Street	Contributing	ca. 1885
43.	Doerre Bldg.	135 South 4th Street	Contributing	1891
44.	Doerre Block	201 South 4th Street	Contributing	1886
45.	Lienlokken Bank	203 South 4th Street	Contributing	1891
46.	Zeisler Bldg.	204 South 4th Street	Contributing	1889
47.	C.F. Klein Bldg.	207 South 4th Street	Contributing	1891
48.	commercial building	208 South 4th Street	Non-contributing	ca. 1900

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Fifth Avenue

49.	DeLacy Saloon	111-113 South 5th Ave.	Contributing	ca. 1900
50.	commercial building	112 South 5th Ave.	Non-Contributing	ca. 1920's
51.	Frank J. Hoeschler Bldg.	115 South 5th Ave.	Contributing	1930
52.	Star Steam Laundry	116 South 5th Ave.	Contributing	ca. 1890
53.	Eagle Hotel	120 South 5th Ave.	Contributing	ca. 1885
54.	Schultz Dry Cleaners	122 South 5th Ave.	Contributing	ca. 1928
55.	Hollywood Theatre	123 South 5th Ave.	Contributing	1936
56.	Boschert & Tausche Grocery	124 South 5th Ave.	Contributing	ca. 1885
57.	Exchange Building	201-5 South 5th Ave.	Contributing	1940
58.	Leath Building	207 South 5th Ave.	Contributing	1928-29
59.	J.C. Penney's Building	211 South 5th Ave.	Contributing	ca. 1913

State Street

60.	commercial building	312 State Street	Contributing	ca. 1900
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Main Street

61.	Healy Block	200-212 Main Street	Contributing	1879 (NRHP)
62.	Pffiffner's Block	218-222 Main Street	Non-Contributing	1868
63.	Bliss & Sill Building	307-309 Main Street	Contributing	1885
64.	Moeller Building	308 Main Street	Contributing	ca. 1867
65.	Rose Jeweler Bldg.	310 Main Street	Non-Contributing	ca. 1884
66.	State Bank Bldg.	311 Main Street	Contributing	1885
67.	Stirneman's Grocery	312 Main Street	Contributing	ca. 1885
68.	Weix Building	313 Main Street	Contributing	ca. 1884
69.	Linker Hotel	318 Main Street	Contributing	1927
70.	Batavian Bank	319 Main Street	Contributing	1887-8
71.	First Bank LaCrosse	321 Main Street	Non-Contributing	ca. 1950's
72.	Miller & Wolfe Attorneys	322-324 Main Street	Contributing	ca. 1901
73.	A. Steinlein Bldg.	327 Main Street	Contributing	ca. 1869
74.	McDonald's	328 Main Street	Non-Contributing	1960's

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75.	Mrs. H. Hunt Bldg.	329-33 Main Street	Contributing	1868
76.	Doerflinger Bldg.	400 Main Street	Contributing	1903-04
77.	McMillan Building	401 Main Street	Contributing	1885-6
78.	Koenig's Millinery Shop	410 Main Street	Non-Contributing	ca. 1884
79.	Grand Union Tea Co.	412 Main Street	Non-Contributing	ca. 1890
80.	First City Hall	407-411 Main Street	Contributing	1869, 1917
81.	Newburg Bldg.	413-21 Main Street	Contributing	1917
82.	John Reh fuss Bldg.	414-418 Main Street	Contributing	1894
83.	Richardson & Frye Bldg.	422 Main Street	Non-Contributing	ca. 1893
84.	H.B. Callahan Block	423-429 Main Street	Contributing	1881
85.	E.R. Barron Bldg.	426 Main Street	Contributing	1891 (NRHP)
86.	Watson Building	431 Main Street	Contributing	ca. 1884
87.	H. Berger/Stireman Bldg.	500-506 Main Street	Contributing	1886
88.	O.J. Oyen Bldg.	507 Main Street	Contributing	1912
89.	commercial building	508 Main Street	Non-Contributing	ca. 1910's
90.	commercial building	509 Main street	Contributing	ca. 1910's
91.	Parker Building	510 Main Street	Contributing	ca. 1900
92.	Cavanaugh Building	511 Main Street	Contributing	ca. 1901
93.	Simonton Restaurant	512 Main Street	Contributing	ca. 1909
<u>Pearl Street</u>				
94.	George Zeisler Bldg.	201 Pearl Street	Contributing	1886 (NRHP)
95.	Vincent Schwarz Bldg.	205-209 Pearl Street	Contributing	1874-1887
96.	John Voegle Bldg.	211-215 Pearl Street	Contributing	1866-1874
97.	Fred Kroner Bldg.	219 Pearl Street	Contributing	1868
98.	Fred Kroner Bldg.	221 Pearl Street	Non-contributing	1868
99.	commercial building	223-225 Pearl Street	Contributing	ca. 1870's
100.	F. Doerre Bldg.	300-302 Pearl Street	Contributing	1879
101.	John Walter Bldg.	304 Pearl Street	Contributing	1878
102.	Metzger Bldg.	306-312 Pearl Street	Contributing	1891
103.	commercial building	309-13 Pearl Street	Contributing	1876
104.	commercial building	317 Pearl Street	Contributing	1888

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105. E.R. Shirley Bldg.	318 Pearl Street	Contributing	1888
106. Adam Kroner Bldg.	319 Pearl Street	Contributing	ca. 1880's
107. J. Burgermeister Bldg.	323 Pearl Street	Contributing	1885
108. Edwards Building	320-326 Pearl Street	Non-Contributing	ca. 1884
109. Gund Building	327 Pearl Street	Contributing	c. 1885
110. Continental Clothing Building	330 Pearl Street	Contributing	1888

Jay Street

111. New York Fish Co.	321 Jay Street	Contributing	ca. 1909
112. Wiggert Bros. Building	325 Jay Street	Contributing	ca. 1911
113. Wiggert Bros. Building	327 Jay Street	Contributing	ca. 1911
114. Bartl Bldg.	413-417 Jay Street	Contributing	1891
115. commercial building	423-425 Jay Street	Contributing	1895, 1916

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Section 8. Statement of significance

The LaCrosse Commercial Historic District is significant under Criterion C for its assemblage of locally significant examples of commercial buildings which represent various periods of construction and architectural styles and forms during the mid-to-late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Additionally, the district is significant under Criterion A, due to its significance as LaCrosse's primary center of commerce. These commercial buildings supplied local needs as well as the regional ones. Characterized by nineteenth-century and early modern twentieth century architectural styles, the district visually suggests a specific historic time period extending from 1866 to 1940. Only seventeen (17) non-contributing buildings detract from the historic character created by the 115 buildings within the district boundaries. Although the majority of the storefronts have been remodeled, most of the buildings still retain a significant amount of their original integrity. They also represent the largest concentration of architecturally significant commercial buildings in the city.

Historical Background

Nathan Myrick was the first permanent settler in LaCrosse when he established his fur trading post on Barron's Island (later renamed Pettibone) in 1841. The area that became LaCrosse was called "Prairie LaCrosse" by the French fur traders in the area. "Prairie LaCrosse" was traditionally a meeting place for the Winnebago, where they are said to have played a game with netted sticks to catch and throw balls, known as "la crosse." Myrick set up a shack on Barron's Island, on the west bank of the Mississippi River main channel, across the river from the downtown area of present LaCrosse, in the winter of 1841, and moved it to the current corner of Front and State streets the following spring. (History of LaCrosse, WI: 329 - 330, 342)

Once Myrick had started his trading activities with the Indians, steamboats navigating the Mississippi began stopping at his post also. By the 1850s larger numbers of settlers were coming to LaCrosse, drawn by the well-drained, fertile soil of the prairie. Additionally, the river landing where Myrick originally located his trading post was ideally suited to steamboat docking.

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(Nordstern Jubilee, 1907)

Entrepreneurs took advantage of LaCrosse's location as a gateway city to the Great Plains as an opportunity to be jobbers and traders in items which could be marketed to the west. During the 1870-1900 period, important wholesale establishments arose in such fields as hardware, general merchandise, tobacco products, liquor, furniture, groceries, lumber, industrial fittings, grain merchandising, and agricultural seeds, as well as in financial services.

The commercial development and economic prosperity in LaCrosse in the nineteenth century is also closely linked to the opening of the LaCrosse & Milwaukee Railroad in 1858. A marked jump in population can be surmised by consulting population figures. In 1854 a total of 745 people inhabited LaCrosse, while only six years later, in 1860, 3865 people lived in LaCrosse. (Sanford: 55, 60; Wisconsin Blue Book - 1862.)

The city of LaCrosse's commercial development began on the banks of the Mississippi River. The riverfront area between the LaCrosse River and Cass Street, which are approximately one mile from one another, was the preferred settlement location for early industries, such as shipping docks, grain mills, and commodities trading centers, as well as early commercial establishments such as jobbers and hotels. As the river front grew crowded with industrial, transportation-oriented buildings and mills, the commercial service sector of the local economy moved slightly to the east, leaving the riverfront for the more industrial enterprises, as well as the loading yards for ships and trains along Front Street between 1870-1906.

La Crosse was a boom town between 1870 and 1900. As commercial development crept to the east and south, existing residential areas were overcome, and eventually came to fill in the areas to the east, between the downtown riverfront and the bluffs less than three miles to the east. The railroad network expanded during this period, when the Milwaukee Railroad built freighthouses and tracks along Front Street between the river and the commercial district. In 1876 the railroad built a bridge to Minnesota, just up the river from LaCrosse, opening commerce routes to the Dakota Territory. (Bryant: 74)

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Throughout the 1870s and 80s downtown business owners were converting their one and two story frame commercial buildings to brick. Many of these brick blocks were in place by 1882 when Samuel L. Clemens, better known as author Mark Twain, stopped in LaCrosse for an hour during a steamboat excursion. The following is an excerpt, in reference to LaCrosse, from Twain's book Life on the Mississippi, first published in 1883:

Here is a town of 12,000 or 13,000 population, with electric lighted streets, and blocks of buildings which are stately enough and also architecturally fine enough to command respect in any city. It is a choice town, and we made satisfactory use of the hour allowed us, in roaming it over, though the weather was rainier than necessary. (Twain: 434)

By 1880 LaCrosse had a population of 14,505, second in size of Wisconsin cities only to Milwaukee. With the increase of lumber and beer brewing operations, the need for increased commercial development was imminent. (Wisconsin Blue Book, 1913: 108)

The late nineteenth century saw the greatest level of commercial development in LaCrosse, due mostly to the incredible financial success of the numerous lumber mills in the city. LaCrosse was one of the three most important lumbering centers on the Mississippi between 1880 and 1900. LaCrosse lumber mills were producing an average output of nearly 180,000,000 board feet of lumber by the turn of the century, after producing one-ninth that amount only 30 years earlier. However, the lumber industry took a dramatic decline in 1900, due to the depletion of white pine stands in northern Wisconsin. By 1909 there were no lumber mills remaining in LaCrosse. (Sanford: 155)

Despite the decline in the lumber industry by the turn of the century, LaCrosse's commercial and industrial economy remained relatively stable. Drygoods and furniture stores which opened in the 1880s and 90's remained open, and new commercial establishments opened in the early twentieth century, serving the needs of the diversified industrial base of the city.

The LaCrosse Commercial Historic District area retained its status as a regionally important retail center well into the twentieth century. Major department stores such as J.C. Penney's,

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Spurgeon's, and Sears were located in the district, as well as locally important retailers, such as Doerflinger's Department store and Barron's store. Smaller specialty stores, and service businesses, as well as the banking institutions remained in the downtown. Automobile transportation emphasized LaCrosse's retail access to rural communities in western Wisconsin and eastern Minnesota.

Only in the last ten to fifteen years has downtown LaCrosse's economic importance as a retail center been threatened. The opening of the Valley View Mall in 1980, only five miles north of downtown LaCrosse, was the demise of the large department stores in the downtown area. However, with the city and county government centers adjacent to the downtown, and with the recreational and entertainment centers at the Radisson Hotel and the LaCrosse Center, also adjacent to the downtown, revitalization is hopeful.

Architecture

The LaCrosse Commercial Historic District is the historic commercial core of LaCrosse and it contains the city's largest concentration of architecturally significant commercial buildings. The area being nominated contains several generations of buildings beginning with the Commercial Vernacular form John Vogel Buildings (1866-68), the district's oldest buildings, and ending with the Art Moderne style Exchange Building, built in 1940. The buildings built in between these dates are mostly fine representative examples of styles and vernacular forms that were important in Wisconsin and in other states during this period. Many of these buildings are also significant works in the total output of both local and regional architects and builders.

1860s

LaCrosse's commercial development began with the construction of Nathan Myrick's log house and store in 1842. Commercial development increased in the mid-1850s to a great degree when the Milwaukee Railroad and the Mississippi River transportation systems opened LaCrosse to vast economic and development potentials. A series of fires in the 1850s and 60s destroyed most of the frame structures which first dominated the riverfront area. As a result, city fire laws were

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implemented in 1857 to require all new construction in the downtown "fire zone" along First and Second streets to be of substantial, fireproof materials, such as brick and stone. By 1869 this fire zone was extended to Fourth Street. (Sanford: 102)

The earliest remaining brick buildings in the commercial historic district tended to be simple, commercial vernacular forms. The earliest documented significant extant commercial building identified within the district is the modest two-story brick John Vogel Building at 213 - 215 Pearl Street, constructed as a grocery store in 1866. Identical to the adjacent building at 211 Pearl Street, built when John Vogel expanded in 1868 and 1872, the two-story early vernacular commercial buildings are characterized by a plain moulded brick projecting cornice, decorative window heads, and simple 1870's cast iron decoration around the entrance door. (City of LaCrosse Tax Records, 1857 - 1900; Rausch & Zeitlin: 139 - 140)

A similar building to the Vogel buildings, the Fred Kroner Hardware Store at 219 Pearl Street, built in 1867, exhibits many of the same vernacular features as the Vogel buildings. The Mrs. Henry Hunt Building at 329 - 333 Main Street was constructed in 1868 and enlarged in 1884. It is a small vernacular commercial building which has retained its corbeled brick cornice and projecting pediment window heads. (City of LaCrosse Tax Records, 1857 - 1900; LaCrosse Daily Democrat, April 1868; Rausch & Zeitlin: 140)

LaCrosse's early commercial buildings were influenced by the Italianate style that dominated America's commercial districts. However, the style was more often revealed in the ornament and the windows of a commercial building than in its total plan and silhouette, as in the examples of the Vogel buildings and the Mrs. Henry Hunt Building. It should be noted that the earliest example of true Italianate commercial architecture in LaCrosse is exhibited under the metal grille of the non-contributing Rodolf Building at 100 S. Third Street. Constructed of red brick in 1868, the building has ornate cut stone window heads and a corbeled and cut brick cornice visually supported by stone capped brick piers. (Owen and Pratt: 10; Rausch & Zeitlin: 141)

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1870s

Commercial architecture in the 1870s reflected the prosperity of the LaCrosse economy during that decade. Despite the Depression of 1873, LaCrosse's economy was strong, relying heavily on the thriving lumber industry. Buildings being constructed during this period reflected LaCrosse's prosperity through the larger sizes and more elaborate ornamentation being exhibited in the design. Styles which had proven their popularity in other parts of the country were also prevalent in LaCrosse.

The Italianate commercial style was apparently the most popular architectural style in LaCrosse during the 1870's, based on remaining extant buildings in the commercial district which reflect this style. Four especially significant examples of the commercial Italianate style exist in LaCrosse's commercial historic district. The Charles B. Solberg Building, constructed in 1870 at 127-129 South Third Street, exhibits features of the early Italianate style, such as orderliness, elaborate window hoods, and the typical bracketed overhanging cornice. Another significant example of Italianate style in the district is Powell Place, at 200 - 212 Main Street. This building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. This Victorian Italianate style building was constructed in sections between 1872 and 1878, with metal ornamentation supplied by the local W. Hirschheimer Company. Another Italianate style building within the district is the simpler F. Doerre Building at 302 Pearl Street built in 1879. The Pamperin Building, located at 113 S. Second Street, was built in 1879 for tailor George Scharph, in a late Victorian Italianate style, with elaborate sheet metal bracketed and dentil cornice and metal window hoods. (LaCrosse City Tax Records, 1857 - 1894; LaCrosse County History, 1881 : 679 - 680; Taylor: NRHP Powell Place, 1983; Rausch & Zeitlin: 141 - 142; LaCrosse Chronicle 27 June 1879)

The vernacular commercial forms were also being built into the 1870s. The best example of vernacular commercial architecture in the commercial historic district which was constructed during this period is the Bodega, at 118-120 S. Fourth Street, two adjoining buildings constructed in 1876. This two-story brick building exhibits the projecting moulded brick cornices, dentil trim and segmental arch windows which are common to vernacular commercial architecture in LaCrosse. (LaCrosse City Tax Records, 1857 - 1900)

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1880s and 1890s

The 1880s in LaCrosse were years of tremendous construction increases in the commercial district. The population of LaCrosse had increased from 14,505 in 1870 to 25,090 in 1880. The value of merchandise sold by retailers, wholesalers and manufacturers in the city rose 378% from 1880 to 1890. As a result, LaCrosse entrepreneurs had more money, and took advantage of the wide variety of ornate architectural styles which were in vogue during these years throughout the country. (1891 Report of the Board of Trade: 24; Wisconsin Blue Book, 1913: 108)

1880s commercial style preferences in LaCrosse tended to linger with the Italianate style which was so popular in the 1870s, despite the fact that the Italianate style had begun to decline in popularity in other parts of the country. The Bliss and Sill Building at 307 - 309 Main Street was constructed in 1885 as an addition to the Post Office Block on the corner of Third and Main (not extant). The Gantert Block, located at 110 S. Third Street in 1885 was built as a furniture show room for the Gantert brothers. Both of these brick buildings exhibit Italianate features which complement their 1870s neighbors, with the usage of elaborate corbelled and dentiled cornices, and two different interpretations of window hood design on the second and third floors. The Bliss & Sill Building has an elaborate overhanging bracketed cornice, and pilasters dividing the bays of the facade.

The George Zeisler Building at 201 Pearl Street, constructed in 1886, exhibits the more eclectic nature of the Italianate style in LaCrosse, with iron projecting cornice, and classical, Romanesque pediments.

By the 1890s the Italianate style in LaCrosse took on a more eclectic sense. The Doerre Building, at 135 S. Fourth Street, built in 1890, with its Italianate iron cornice, Queen Anne style oriel window, Romanesque polychromatic construction, and Classical or Romanesque arched windows, exhibit this mixture of styles well. The Lienlokken Building, designed by William Parker in 1891, and located at 203 S. Fourth Street, incorporates Italianate features as well as classical features such as full-height projecting pilasters, and classical floral and swag decorative

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panels between the floors. (LaCrosse Morning Chronicle, 4 Oct. 1891)

Local architects Schick and Stoltze, who were in partnership from 1887 - 1899 in LaCrosse, designed two eclectic style commercial buildings during this period. The C. and J. Michel Building at 115 S. Third Street was built in 1892, while the John Rehfuß Building at 412 Main Street was a later Schick and Stoltze design of 1894. The red sandstone-trimmed red brick Rehfuß Building exhibits a projecting cornice in late Italianate style, two-story oriel windows associated with the Queen Anne style, and a row of small, round-arched windows of the Romanesque Revival style forming an arcade at the top of the third story. (LaCrosse Daily Press, 4 July 1891; LaCrosse Chronicle, 24 Sept 1891; LaCrosse Weekly Chronicle, 1 Feb 1894; LaCrosse Republican and Leader, 31 Dec 1894.)

Romanesque styles were popular in LaCrosse in the 1880's and '90's, particularly as a Richardsonian Romanesque interpretation. By the 1880's the robust, rusticated Romanesque style introduced by Henry Hobson Richardson had become popular in America, and LaCrosse had two examples built in the commercial district during this period. The MacMillan Building at 401 Main Street was constructed ca. 1885. It illustrates the imposing sense of massiveness, with rock-faced masonry and rhythmic arcades, which are typical of Richardsonian Romanesque. Solomon Spence Beman, a prominent Chicago architect, designed the Batavian Bank at 319 Main in 1887. Characterized by a Mediterranean type arcade of small arches supported by short Romanesque styled columns that visually echo the colossal two-story Romanesque arches found in its stone facade, the brick and stone building is topped by a projecting cornice. (LaCrosse Chronicle, 13 June 1886)

Neo-Classical commercial architecture was also being built in LaCrosse during the last decades of the nineteenth century, likely in response to the eclectic styles which were also prevalent during this building boom. The best example within the district is the Wisconsin Telephone Company Building at 125 N. Fourth Street, built in 1901, and designed by the Milwaukee architect H.J. Esser. This building was listed on the National Register in 1985. Distinctly Neo-Classical features on this building include the classical mouldings and dentils. (LaCrosse Morning Chronicle, 11 Apr 1900, 16 Mar 1901)

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1900 - 1945

The early twentieth century in LaCrosse was a period of technological advances in commercial architecture, as it was around the nation. The brick commercial blocks which dominated the late nineteenth century commercial landscape in LaCrosse were being complimented by early twentieth century styles which depended on new construction technology that allowed greater building heights, larger window spans, open interior plans and new types of exterior ornamentation.

The Chicago Commercial style, a mode which depended on steel frame technology for structure and historic classical ornamentation for style, gained some popularity in LaCrosse in the first decade of the twentieth century. The best and most prominent example of this style is the Doerflinger Building at 400 Main Street. This building was designed by local architects Schick and Roth and built in 1903. It holds a prominent location at the core of the historic district, and is the first building of modern construction in the city. Other prominent examples of the Chicago Commercial Style in the commercial historic district include the 1917 Newburg Building at 413 - 421 Main Street, and the 1922 Hotel Linker Annex at 112 S. Fourth Street, as well as the eight-story brick Linker Hotel at 318 Main Street, enlarged to its present size in 1927. (LaCrosse Chronicle 27 Apr 1904; LaCrosse Tribune, 12 August 1927; LaCrosse City Tax Records, 1857 - 1918, 1925)

While the Chicago Commercial style is structurally supported by a steel frame, it is essentially a brick facade. As the twentieth century progressed, experimentation with building materials continued. By 1930 the first major commercial building of reinforced concrete construction was introduced when the Hoeschler Building at 115 S. Fifth Avenue was completed, designed by local architects Parkinson and Dockendorff. While this architectural firm was known for their Neo-classical designs, this Art Deco style building relied on its full-height piers and colored ceramic and metallic-tile mosaic panels to portray a modern sense to the commercial character of downtown LaCrosse. (Rausche & Zeitlin, 1984: 155)

The Art Moderne style was introduced on Fifth Avenue South, just south of the Hoeschler

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Building, when the streamlined Exchange Building, designed by Racine, Wisconsin architect J. Mandor Matson, was built for the Hoeschler family in 1940. The Exchange Building has a geometric styled trim and mouldings around the entrance, and is also constructed of reinforced concrete. (Rausche & Zeitlin, 1984: 156; LaCrosse Tribune, 15 June 1940)

The twentieth century in LaCrosse also saw the introduction of historic styles with twentieth century technology integrated for a newer, more modern look. An excellent example of this style of building is the O. J. Oyen Building at 509 Main Street, which was designed by architect Percy Bentley and interior designer/owner Odin Oyen. The style of this 1912 three-story brick building is reflective of Mediterranean Revival style, with a decorative pent roof, which is supported by brackets, and a recessed second story window opening which is accented with a pair of columns in the recess.

The Rivoli Building, at 115 - 123 N. Fourth Street, was designed by local architects Parkinson and Dockendorff in 1920. This Neo-Classical style, four-story building features four storefronts, as well as a centered entrance to a movie theater, which once boasted to be the grandest in the city. The symmetrical facade is divided into eleven bays by three-story brick pilasters, capped by decorative molded panels. The cornice also features a series of molded panels with oval designs inset in the panels, and the center of the cornice is further accented by a rounded top parapet.

The LaCrosse Commercial Historic District, then, is notable for the breadth of the styles its resources represent and for the excellence of the design of many of its individual buildings. Individually, many of these buildings are important works of both locally and regionally significant architects and builders. Collectively, these buildings are also important because they form a clearly distinct area that successfully evokes the important role LaCrosse has played in the commercial history of west-central Wisconsin.

Commerce Theme: Goods and Services, Wholesale, and Informational Services Topics

Downtown LaCrosse has a history of great commercial diversity, in part due to its location as a

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gateway to the western plains, as well as its prominence as the largest Wisconsin city located on the Mississippi River. The LaCrosse Commercial Historic District served as the most important commercial center in west-central Wisconsin for nearly 150 years. LaCrosse's most prominent commercial buildings exist as examples of this commercial diversity.

Service, Retail and Entertainment Businesses

LaCrosse's commercial district has historically been the center of service and retail businesses, as well as entertainment facilities throughout its history. Though many of the significant structures in LaCrosse's downtown have fluctuated in their usage, many have had a long history under the same use and business name.

Service Businesses

Banking institutions in LaCrosse became increasingly important as the commercial downtown developed and as the lumber industry thrived, from 1852, when LaCrosse's first sawmill was built, to the turn of the century, when only three sawmills remained in LaCrosse.

By 1870 there were two banks in LaCrosse. The Batavian Bank was formed in 1862, by Gysbert Van Steenwyk. Van Steenwyk had been on the State Banking Commission, assisting Wisconsin banks through the financial crash of 1857. He resigned in 1861 and by 1862 had founded the Batavian Bank in LaCrosse, where he resided. He built the impressive Batavian Building at 319 Main Street in 1888. (Sanford: 82, 83, 210)

The LaCrosse National Bank organized in 1877, with G.C. Hixon as president. It was located in a building at the southeast corner of Main and Third Streets (not extant). In 1896 it became the National Bank of LaCrosse, and in 1905 they located in their new building at 125 N. Fourth Street. In 1879 the banking firm of J.M. Holley and Emil M. Borreson was formed, and by 1883 it incorporated as the State Bank of LaCrosse, with D.D. McMillan as its president. By 1884 they were located in their new building at 311 Main Street. (Sanford: 210, 211)

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The Wisconsin Telephone Company served LaCrosse's communication needs for a number of years, having established an office in LaCrosse at 108 Main Street in 1881. By 1901 the company had constructed a two story brick building, designed by Milwaukee architect H. J. Esser, located at 125 N. Fourth Street. (Goodrich, Sketches, Vol. 4: 63; Rausch: "National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form - Wisconsin Telephone Company Building, 125 N. Fourth St., LaCrosse, WI." 1985)

Another type of service business which had some influence in the commercial historic district was in the area of health care. The Solberg Building at 127 - 129 S. Third Street is known historically as the site of the office of Dr. Adolph Gunderson, who went on to found the Gunderson Clinic. (History of LaCrosse County: 679 - 680.)

Powell Place, at 200 - 212 Main Street, was the address of the office of Dr. David Franklin Powell, an "eclectic" physician and politician, from 1881 to 1891. Dr. Powell, who was more colorfully known by his given Indian name, "White Beaver," had been an army post surgeon in the 1870s at Fort McPherson, North Platte Barracks, Camp Stambaugh and Fort Laramie. After a brief medical practice in Lanesboro, Minnesota, Powell moved to LaCrosse and located his practice at 200 - 212 Main Street. As an "eclectic" physician, Powell utilized primarily botanical medications. Powell patented a number of his remedies, which had such colorful names as "Cough Cream" and "Yosemite Yarrow." Powell Place continued its health care business history when the LaCrosse Drug Company occupied the building from 1930 to 1944. (Taylor, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form, Powell Place, 200 - 212 Main Street, LaCrosse, WI," 1983)

Hotels were once plentiful in downtown LaCrosse, however, change of usage, as well as demolition, has resulted in no historic hotels in current use in the downtown. However, under other uses, a few of LaCrosse's historic hotels are extant. The Schwarz Building, at 205 - 209 Pearl Street, though originally constructed as a furniture and undertaking business in 1887, was converted to the Bronson Hotel in the 1890s. This hotel, though it changed ownership and names through the years, remained operating as a hotel until 1967. (LaCrosse City Directories, 1888, 1895, 1909, 1911, 1915, 1916, 1922, 1967.)

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The Linker Hotel Building is the other remaining hotel in the downtown area. Located at 318 Main Street, this building was constructed in sections. The original portion, located at 112 S. Fourth Street, was constructed in 1915 as a three story brick building, exhibiting classical as well as Sullivanesque ornamental motifs. A five-story addition, making the completed building eight stories tall on Main Street, was built in 1927, perpendicular to the first part of the hotel construction. The section on Main Street is today utilized as offices. (LaCrosse City Directory, 1925; Sanborn: 1891, 1906, 1938; LaCrosse Leader Press, 11 September 1915; LaCrosse Tribune, 12 August 1927)

Retail

Besides services, LaCrosse's downtown served the major retail needs of the city and surrounding rural communities. A number of the retail establishments that concentrated in the downtown area, which stayed for many years. A good example of this is the E.R. Barron Company, a dry goods establishment which first came to LaCrosse in 1886. Edwin R. Barron first opened his store in the McMillan Building at 401 Main Street. However, in 1891 he constructed the E.R. Barron Building at 426 Main Street to house his dry goods retail business. The first floor and basement housed his retail showrooms, while the second story housed offices, and the third floor was the meeting hall of the Masonic Temple. After Barron's death in 1897, the building became the property of the E.R. Barron Company, and the firm continued in this location as a dry goods store until 1965, when the building was sold to Herbergers, an upper midwest department store chain. Thus, the E.R. Barron Company continued in business in LaCrosse for a total of 79 years. (Rausch: "National Register of Historic Places Nomination - Inventory Form - E.R. Barron Building, " 1985; LaCrosse Republican & Leader, 23 March 1897)

Other prominent retail dry goods stores operated in the district. The Park Store, later known as Doerflingers, was established by William Doerflinger in 1881, in a small frame building on S. Fourth Street. By 1897, the store was located on the southeast corner of Fourth and Main streets in a brick structure known as the Gile Building. However, this property burned in 1903, and the

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present Chicago Commercial style, four-story brick structure was constructed in 1903-04. By 1908 the business was known as Doerflinger's Store, and continued under that name as a department store until 1984. (LaCrosse City Directories, 1881 - 1910; Crocker, 1977: n.p.; LaCrosse Republican Leader, 1 August 1881)

The Continental Clothing Company Building at 200 S. Fourth Street was constructed in 1888. It originally operated as the Park Store, a partnership which was operated by Edward Bosshard and William Doerflinger until 1893-94, when Doerflinger moved to his new location at 400 Main Street. By the turn of the century this building was operated by the Continental Clothing Store and the storefront has operated as a clothing store since. (LaCrosse City Directories, 1884 - 1900)

Twentieth-century department stores also had a commercial presence in the district. The Sears Building was constructed at 207 S. Fifth Avenue in 1928. The Hoeschler Building, located at 115 S. Fifth Avenue, was constructed in 1930 and until 1981 housed J.C. Penney's. (LaCrosse Tribune, 1 November 1928; Sanborn: 1954)

The Lienlokken Building at 203 S. Fourth Street, though constructed originally in 1891 to house the Lienlokken Bank, was utilized by the Tausche Hardware Company from 1893 until 1970. The adjacent Doerre-Tausche Building, at 201 S. Fourth Street, was constructed as early as 1887, and was part of the Tausche Hardware Company also until 1970. (Sanborn: 1879 - 1956; LaCrosse City Directories, 1884 - 1900.)

Entertainment

The George Zeisler Building, built in 1886 at 201 Pearl Street, was constructed for George Zeisler, the owner of the Plank Road Brewery in LaCrosse. The building was operated as the Morning Call Sample Room, for the sale of his brewed products. Though there were several owners, many also operated this location as a tavern, as late as the 1940s. (LaCrosse City Directories, 1888 - 1940.)

The Bodega represents one of the commercial district's most historically significant buildings

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representing the entertainment business. The business known as the Bodega was housed in two contiguous vernacular commercial two-story brick buildings constructed in 1876 at 120 and 122 S. Fourth Street as a grocery and liquor store. By 1926 the owners of these buildings combined the properties and began serving food in order to survive the lean times of Prohibition. Until the 1989 the Bodega remained a restaurant. (LaCrosse Tribune, 3 January 1954, 31 October 1989.)

The C. & J. Michel Building was constructed at 113 - 115 S. Third Street by the Michel Brewery in 1891 to house one of the Michel Brewery's many "sample rooms." By 1905 the building was housing the Novelty Restaurant, which advertised "We Never Close." The Bijou Theatre was located at this address from 1904 - 1921 and 1935 - 1939. (Crocker: "C. & J. Michel Building," 1983; Connell, 1993.)

Another such business in the downtown area is the Gund Building, constructed in 1885 at 327 Pearl Street. This building originally housed a saloon intended to sell the products of the Gund Brewery in LaCrosse. Though it was owned and operated by a number of people, the Gund Building continued as a saloon until 1918, when Prohibition began. The John Walter Building at 304 Pearl Street, constructed in 1878 for John Walter, was also run as a saloon. It was purchased by the John Gund Brewery in 1905 and was known as the Buffet Bar until Prohibition. Sometime after Prohibition the first floor facade and interior was renovated with a Moderne motif, utilizing black Vitrolite or Carrara glass on the facade, and curved, tiered Moderne benches and tables, and back-bar on the interior. (LaCrosse City Directories; LaCrosse City Tax Records, 1870 - 1918.)

The Rivoli Theatre was constructed in 1920 at 115 - 123 N. Fourth Street. With an original seating capacity of 1,025, the Rivoli was the largest and grandest of the downtown movie theatres. The building was designed by LaCrosse architects Parkinson and Dockendorff for the LaCrosse Theatres Company. Interior design was executed by local artist Odin Oyen. However, in 1931, the interior was renovated, with the installation of a modern sound system and alteration of the interior auditorium to resemble a Spanish courtyard, and starlit sky overhead. (Palmer: 17 - 20)

The Hollywood Theatre is the only other theatre in the commercial historic district. Constructed in 1936 at 123 S. Fifth Avenue, the Hollywood originally had 1,000 seats and was considered a

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first-run deluxe theatre. (Palmer: 21)

Though LaCrosse's commercial historic district is dominated by retail and service business uses, a few of the buildings, in addition to retail facilities, housed important small industries that were important to LaCrosse's local and regional economy. The downtown's proximity to the transportation routes of the river and railroad allowed these small industries to disperse their products to a wider region. Due to these industries being located in the central business district, invariably each had retail showroom space in their buildings.

Cigar manufacturing was a long-term small industry in the downtown area of LaCrosse. John Pamperin founded his cigar manufactory in 1865. The Pamperin Building was constructed at 113 S. Second Street in 1879 as a tailor shop for George Sharpf. Pamperin located in this building in 1904. Pamperin produced sixty-four brands at one time, most by hand. The company stopped making cigars in 1945 but continued producing chewing tobacco until 1986 when the firm closed. (Sanford: 179; LaCrosse Tribune, 13 December 1986.)

A number of wood product industries existed in LaCrosse from the late 1800s into the twentieth century. Two of these industries had show rooms and manufacturing facilities in the commercial historic district. In 1859 William and Fred Tillman began manufacturing furniture, and their wholesale and retail store was built at 118 S. Fourth Street in 1889. Steven Gantert established a furniture manufacturing business in 1863 and his retail/wholesale building was constructed at 110 S. Third Street in 1874. Gantert made an addition to the original building in 1885, with cast iron columns accenting the plate glass display windows. (Sanford: 176; Crocker: "Gantert Building," 1983)

The Buckle Building, at 111 S. Third Street, was constructed in 1887 by Andrew Buckle to house his cabinet and coffin construction business. (Crocker: "Buckle Building," 1983)

Several of the district's commercial buildings provided upper floor space to several of LaCrosse's fraternal and labor organizations. A number of fraternal organizations existed in the city of LaCrosse, becoming active as early as 1852, with the formation of the Masons. Many of these groups either constructed buildings or met in buildings in the commercial historic district. The

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Rodolf Building, built at 100 S. Third Street by Theodore Rodolf in 1869, became the home of a number of LaCrosse fraternal organizations, including the various lodges of the I.O.O.F., the Ancient Order of United Workmen (A.O.U.W.), the Knights of Pythias, Knights of Honor, the Daughters of Rebecca and the Royal Arcanum. (Rausch & Zeitlin: 308)

By 1887, the Odd Fellows were meeting in their own building located at 121 S. Fourth Street, erected in 1886. (Sanborn: 1884, 1887, 1906)

LaCrosse had a number of small craft unions which were established in the last decade of the nineteenth century. These early craft unions served their membership as supportive fraternal organizations, as well as benevolent societies. Due to their small membership size and specific loyalties, they never gained much power as union organizers. The Knights of Labor, one such group, met from 1885 - 1890 at Atkinson's Hall at 124-126 N. Third Street. (Rausch & Zeitlin: 314)

Archaeological Potential

LaCrosse was the home to many cultures since people first arrived along the Mississippi River some 13,000 years ago, and the archaeological remains of these past cultures are well documented for LaCrosse. Many of the records of the archaeology of the downtown area were based on early surveys or newspaper accounts. For example, Lapham noted a series of mounds somewhat back from the river edge in 1852, and the newspapers contain numerous records of artifact and burial findings throughout the city. Several are adjacent to or within the proposed district, including Indian burials found at 108 Main Street, one block east of the district boundaries. Others have been reported at the old courthouse block, one block north of the district boundaries. Additionally, the graves of two boys who died in 1859-60 were found 50 feet south of Pearl Street, along the Milwaukee Road right of way, less than one block outside the district boundaries. Besides the burials, early records also mention habitation-related artifact finds in the downtown area, many within the district boundaries.

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Though no recorded archaeological sites exist within the boundaries of the LaCrosse Commercial Historic District, the district is situated in an area from which both prehistoric and historic archaeological resources were documented in the initial development of the city, and recent redevelopment in the downtown area has repeatedly brought forth evidence of intact archaeological remains. Consequently, the proposed district has almost certain potential of harboring significant archaeological remains. (Boszhardt: 10 June 1992)

Preservation Activities

LaCrosse has a relatively strong sense of its history, which is evident through the existence of a number of organizations and activities in the city. The LaCrosse County Historical Society runs the historic Hixon House and Swarthout Museum. The Preservation Alliance of LaCrosse (PAL) is a grassroots preservation group which serves the preservation needs of the community through Heritage Awards, educational programs and saving endangered historic resources. The LaCrosse Historic Preservation Commission was formed by city ordinance to advise city preservation activities. The Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse has worked extensively on both the prehistory and history of the immediate area. The city of LaCrosse helped fund a State Historical Society of Wisconsin architectural/historical intensive survey in 1984. Finally, Downtown Mainstreet, Inc. (DMI) received a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the city in 1992 to have a comprehensive master plan of the central business district established and implemented. They incorporated a strong historic preservation component, which included the nomination of the commercial historic district, a historic walking tour brochure, and an update of the city's historic preservation ordinance. Thus, this nomination is one of the end products of the LaCrosse Comprehensive Master Plan.

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Section number 10 Page 1 LaCrosse Commercial Historic District, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin

Verbal Boundary Description

The LaCrosse Commercial Historic District in LaCrosse, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin, begins at the northeast corner of Main and S. Second Streets, continuing easterly along the south curb of Main Street to the southwest corner of Main and Third Streets, continuing northerly on east curb of N. Third Street to the northeast corner of N. Third and State Streets, then continuing easterly along the south curb of State Street to the southwest corner of State and N. Fourth Streets, continuing southerly along the west curb of N. Fourth Street, to 115 N. Fourth Street, turning east, across N. Fourth Street, continuing easterly the rear, north lot lines of the 400 block of Main Street. Continue easterly across S. Fifth Avenue, following the rear (north) lot lines of 507 - 511 Main Street. Then turning southwest, continue to the south side of Main Street, following the rear (east) lot lines of 512 Main Street and 111 - 123 S. Fifth Avenue. Continue south across Jay Street, to follow the rear (east) lot lines of 201 - 211 S. Fifth Avenue. Then turn west, along the south (side) lot line of 211 S. Fifth Avenue, to the east side of S. Fifth Avenue, continuing northerly to the northeast corner of S. Fifth Avenue and Jay Street. Turn west, following the north curb of Jay Street, continuing along the 400 block of Jay Street. Continue west across S. Fourth Street, to follow the north curb of the 300 block of Jay Street. At the northeast corner of Jay Street and S. Third Street, continue northerly along the east curb of S. Third Street to the northeast corner of S. Third Street and Pearl Street, turning west on Pearl Street. Continue westerly along the north curb of the 200 block of Pearl Street to the northeast corner of Pearl Street and S. Second Street, turning north and continuing northerly along the east curb of the 100 block of S. Second Street to the northeast corner of S. Second Street and Main Street which is the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The LaCrosse Commercial Historic District's boundaries encompass the early central business district of LaCrosse. Though some of the central business district's commercial businesses fall outside the boundaries of this district, the boundaries were chosen because of the cohesiveness of the historic integrity of this grouping of buildings. Nearly all of the buildings within the district

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Section number 10 Page 2 LaCrosse Commercial Historic District, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin

retain their architectural character. These buildings represent the earliest extant commercial building in downtown LaCrosse, constructed in 1866, while the latest was, constructed in 1940. The district is bounded by new buildings and a vacant lot to the north, newer buildings to the west, vacant lots and older buildings with lost architectural integrity to the south, and vacant lots to the east.

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LaCrosse Commercial Historic District, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin

6. Function or Use, continued

Historic Function

COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant

Current Function

COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant

7. Description: Architectural Classification, continued

Chicago

Prairie School

Art Deco

Moderne

8. Statement of Significance: Architect/Builder, continued

Parkinson, Albert E. & Dockendorff, Bernard J.

Merman, Otto

Esser, Herman J.

Beman, Solomon S.

Bentley, Percy

Matson, J. Mandor

10. Geographical Data, continued

UTM References:

E: 15/640840/4852300

F: 15/640800/4852105

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Section number Photos Page 1 LaCrosse Commercial Historic District, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin

LA CROSSE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

LaCrosse, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin

Photographs by Barbara Kooiman

June 1992

Negatives at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin

The above information applies to all of the following photographs:

Photo # 1 of 46

100 Block S. Second Street, east side of block, left to right, facing south

109 S. Second St., Addition to Healy Block

111 S. Second St., C. & J. Michel Building

113 S. Second St., Pamperin Cigar Co. Building

125 S. Second St., M. Hanson Building

129 S. Second St., Warminger Building

Photo # 2 of 46

200 Block Main Street, south side of block, left to right, facing east

218 - 222 Main St. , Piffner Block

200 - 212 Main St., Healy Block

Photo #3 of 46

300 Block of Main Street, south side of street, left to right, facing east

328 Main St., McDonald's Restaurant

322-324 Main St., Miller & Wolfe, Attorneys

318 Main St., Linker Hotel

312 Main St., Stirneman's Grocery

310 Main St., Rose Jewelry Building

308 Main St., Moeller Building

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LaCrosse Commercial Historic District, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin

Photo #4 of 46

300 Block Main Street, north side of street, left to right, facing east

- 307 - 309 Main St., Bliss & Sill Building
- 311 Main St., State Bank Building
- 313 Main St., Weix Building
- 319 Main St., Batavian Bank Building
- 321 Main St., First Bank of LaCrosse
- 327 Main St., A. Steinlein Building
- 329 - 333 Main St., Mrs. H. Hunt Building

Photo #5 of 46

400 Block of Main Street, north side of street, left to right, facing east

- 401 Main St., McMillian Building
- 407 - 411 Main St., First City Hall
- 413 - 421 Main St., Newburg Building
- 423 - 429 Main St., H.B. Callahan Building
- 431 Main St., Watson Building

Photo # 6 of 46

400 Block of Main Street, south side of street, left to right, facing east

- 426 Main St., E. R. Barron Building
- 422 Main St., Richardson & Frye Building
- 414 - 418 Main St., John Rehfuss Building
- 412 Main Street, Grand Union Tea Company
- 410 Main St., Koenig's Millinery Shop
- 400 Main St., Doerflinger Building

Photo # 7 of 46

500 Block of Main Street, north side of street, left to right, facing east

- 507 Main St., O. J. Oyen Building
- 509 Main St., commercial building

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Section number Photos Page 3

LaCrosse Commercial Historic District, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin

511 Main St., Cavanaugh Building

Photo #8 of 46

500 Block of Main Street, south side of street, left to right, facing east

512 Main St., Simonton Restaurant

510 Main St., Parker Building

508 Main St., commercial building

500 - 506 Main St., H. Berger/Stireman Building

Photo #9 of 46

100 Block of Fifth Avenue South, west side of street, left to right, facing south

124 Fifth Avenue South, Boschert & Tausche Grocery

122 Fifth Avenue South, Schultz Dry Cleaners

118 Fifth Avenue South, Eagle Hotel

116 Fifth Avenue South, Star Steam Laundry

112 Fifth Avenue South, commercial building

Photo #10 of 46

100 Block of Fifth Avenue South, east side of street, left to right, facing south

111 - 113 Fifth Avenue South, DeLacy Saloon

115 Fifth Avenue South, Frank J. Hoeschler Building

123 Fifth Avenue South, Hollywood Theater

Photo #11 of 46

200 Block of Fifth Avenue South, east side of street, left to right, facing south

201 - 205 Fifth Avenue South, Exchange Building

207 Fifth Avenue South, Leath Building

211 Fifth Avenue South, J.C. Penney's Building

Photo #12 of 46

400 Block of Jay Street, north side of street, left to right, facing west

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Section number Photos Page 4 LaCrosse Commercial Historic District, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin

413 - 417 Jay St., Bartl Building
423 - 425 Jay St., commercial building

Photo #13 of 46

300 Block of Jay Street, north side of street, left to right, facing west

321 Jay St., New York Fish Company
325 Jay St., Wiggert Brothers Building
327 Jay St., Wiggert Brothers Building
208 S. Fourth St., commercial building

Photo #14 of 46

200 Block of South Fourth Street, west side of street, left to right, facing north

204 S. Fourth St., Zeisler Building
330 Pearl St., Continental Clothing Co.

Photo #15 of 46

200 Block of South Fourth Street, east side of street, left to right, facing north

133 S. Fourth St., Kirkeeng Building
135 S. Fourth St., Doerre Building
201 S. Fourth St., Doerre Block
203 S. Fourth St., Lienlokken Bank
207 S. Fourth St., C.F. Klein Building

Photo #16 of 46

100 Block of South Fourth Street, west side of street, left to right, facing north

120- 122 S. Fourth St., The Bodega
118 S. Fourth St., Tillman Brothers Building
114 S. Fourth St., Dengler Building
112 S. Fourth St., Linker Hotel Annex

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Section number Photos Page 5 LaCrosse Commercial Historic District, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin

Photo #17 of 46

100 Block of South Fourth Street, east side of street, left to right, facing north

117 S. Fourth St., Willing Building

121 S. Fourth St., Odd Fellow Temple

123 S. Fourth St., commercial building

127 S. Fourth St., commercial building

129 S. Fourth St., Dittman & Jorstad Hardware

Photo # 18 of 46

100 Block of North Fourth Street, west side of street, left to right, facing north

107 - 109 N. Fourth St., commercial building

111 N. Fourth, commercial building

115 - 123 N. Fourth St., Rivoli Building

125 N. Fourth St., Wisconsin Telephone Company Building

Photo #19 of 46

300 Block of State Street, south side of street, facing west

312 State St., commercial building

Photo #20 of 46

100 Block of N. Third Street, east side of street, left to right, facing south

128 N. Third St., Meason Building

124 - 126 N. Third St., Atkinson Building

122 N. Third St., Schierl Building

118 N. Third St., drive through bank

110 N. Third St., Pryor Building

108 N. Third St., Hammon Building

Photo #21 of 46

100 Block of South Third Street, east side of street, left to right, facing north

127 - 129 S. Third St., Charles Solberg Building

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Section number Photos Page 6 LaCrosse Commercial Historic District, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin

123 S. Third St., Hals Drug Store
119-121 S. Third St, Jehlen Building
113 - 115 S. Third St., C. & J. Michel Building
111 S. Third St., Buckle Building
107 - 109 S. Third St., W.E. P. Building
105 S. Third St., Potter & Morris Building

Photo #22 of 46

100 Block of South Third Street, west side of street, left to right, facing north

126 - 128 S. Third St., Esperson Block
120 S. Third St., Knuteson Building
118 S. Third St., P. Wehrers Building
116 S. Third St., commercial building
110 S. Third St., S. Gantert Block
100 S. Third St., Rodolf Building

Photo #23 of 46

200 Block of South Third Street, east side of street, left to right, facing north

213 - 215 S. Third St., Z. & B. Block
217 - 221 S. Third St., Johnson & Iverson Saloon
223 S. Third St., Cities Service Filling Station

Photo # 24 of 46

200 Block of Pearl Street, north side of street, left to right, facing east

201 Pearl St., Zeisler Building
205 - 209 Pearl St., Vincent Schwarz Building
211 Pearl St., John Voegle Building
213-215 Pearl St., John Voegle Building
219 Pearl St., Fred Kroner Building
221 Pearl St., Fred Kroner Building
223 - 225 Pearl St., commercial building

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Section number Photos Page 7 LaCrosse Commercial Historic District, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin

Photo #25 of 46

300 Block of Pearl Street, north side of street, left to right, facing east

- 309 - 313 Pearl St., commercial building
- 317 Pearl St., commercial building
- 319 Pearl St., Adam Kroner Building
- 323 Pearl St., J. Burgermeister Building
- 327 Pearl St., Gund Building

Photo # 26 of 46

300 Block of Pearl Street, south side of street, left to right, facing east

- 320 - 326 Pearl St., Edwards Building
- 318 Pearl St., E.R. Shirley Building
- 306 - 312 Pearl St., Metzger Building
- 304 Pearl St., John Walter Building
- 300 - 302 Pearl St., F. Doerre Building

Photo # 27 of 46

200 and 300 Block of Pearl Street
facing east

Photo #28 of 46

323 Pearl Street
Burgemeister Building
facing northeast

Photo # 29 of 46

304 Pearl Street
John Walter Building
facing southeast

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Photo # 30 of 46

213 - 215 Pearl Street

Vogle Building

facing north

Photo # 31 of 46

205 - 209 Pearl Street

Schwarz Building

facing north

Photo #32 of 46

125 N. Fourth St.

Wisconsin Telephone Company Building

facing southwest

Photo # 33 of 46

115 - 123 N. Fourth St.

Rivoli Building

facing west

Photo # 34 of 46

112 S. Fourth St.

Linker Hotel Annex

facing west

Photo # 35 of 46

118 S. Fourth St.

Tillman Brothers Building

facing west

Photo # 36 of 46

203 S. Fourth St.

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Lienlokken Bank Building
facing east

Photo # 37 of 46
207 S. Fourth St.
C.F. Klein Building
facing northeast

Photo #38 of 46
127 - 129 S. Third St.
Solberg Building
facing northeast

Photo # 39 of 46
110 S. Third St.
Gantert Building
facing southwest

Photo #40 of 46
426 Main St.
E. R. Barron Building
facing southwest

Photo # 41 of 46
413 - 421 Main Street
Newburg Building
facing northeast

Photo # 42 of 46
414 - 418 Main Street
Rehfuss Building

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LaCrosse Commercial Historic District, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin

facing southeast

Photo # 43 of 46

400 Main Street

Doerflinger Building

facing southeast

Photo # 44 of 46

319 Main Street

Batavian Bank Building

facing northeast

Photo # 45 of 46

200 - 212 Main Street

Healy Block

facing southeast

Photo # 46 of 46




113 S. Second Street

Pamperin Cigar Company Building

facing east



LaCrosse Historic Commercial District
 LA CROSSE, LA CROSSE COUNTY,
 WISCONSIN

-  Contributing
-  Non-Contributing
-  District Boundaries

Not to Scale

prepared by
 U.S. West Research
 LaCrosse, WI

